AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An image processing apparatus ~~as claimed in claim 3~~, comprising:

appending information generating means for generating appending information based on contents of an image data when the image data is received from outside of the image processing apparatus;

a data storage unit for storing an other image data including the appending information;

correlativity judgment means for judging a correlativity between the image data and the another image data based on the appending information;

maintenance judgment means for judging whether the received image data is to be maintained in the data storage unit based on the correlativity, wherein

when the maintenance judgment means judges that the image data is not to be maintained, the maintenance judgment means deletes the received image data from the image processing apparatus,

a communication unit for communicating with other image processing apparatuses, wherein when it is judged that the image data is not to be maintained, said maintenance judgment means causes said communication unit to transfer the image data to the other image processing apparatuses;

wherein said maintenance judgment means attaches information for identifying an image processing apparatus, which is an origin of the image data, and the information for identifying the other image processing apparatuses, which is a destination of the image data, to the image data as a transference history of the image data when the image data is to be transferred.

5. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

appending information attaching means for attaching the appending information to the image data.

6. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

composite means for composing the image data with the other image data based on the correlativity information.

7. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12,

wherein said appending information generating means generates information indicating contents of the image data as the appending information by analyzing the image.

8. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12,

wherein said appending information generating means generates processing conditions for processing the image data as the appending information by analyzing the image.

9. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

selection means for selecting the other image data, ~~which~~ that is to be used for judgment of the correlativity, using at least a part of the appending information.

10. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 9,

wherein said ~~selection means~~ selecting repeats ~~to select a plurality of the other image data~~ until a predetermined number of the other image data are selected.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An image processing apparatus ~~as claimed in claim 9~~, comprising:

appending information generating means for generating appending information based on contents of an image data when the image data is received from outside of the image processing apparatus;

a data storage unit for storing an other image data including the appending information;

correlativity judgment means for judging a correlativity between the image data and the another image data based on the appending information;

maintenance judgment means for judging whether the received image data is to be maintained in the data storage unit based on the correlativity, wherein

when the maintenance judgment means judges that the image data is not to be maintained, the maintenance judgment means deletes the received image data from the image processing apparatus,

selection means for selecting the other image data, that is to be used for judgment of the correlativity, using at least a part of the appending information;

wherein said correlativity judgment means further judges whether the correlativity between the selected other image data and the image data is higher than a predetermined value, and

said selection means repeats to select a plurality of the other image data until the other image data, of which the correlativity with the image data is higher than the predetermined value, are selected more than a predetermined number.

12. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

appending information generating means for generating appending information based on contents of an image data when the image data is received from outside of the image processing apparatus;

a data storage unit for storing an other image data including the appending information;

correlativity judgment means for judging a correlativity between the image data and the ~~an~~other image data based on the appending information;

a communication unit for communicating with other image processing apparatuses; and

maintenance judgment means for judging whether the received image data is to be maintained in the data storage unit based on the correlativity, wherein

when it is judged that the image data is not to be maintained, said maintenance judgment means causes said communication unit to transfer the image data to the other image processing apparatuses ~~wherein~~

~~when the maintenance judgment means judges that the image data is not to be maintained, the maintenance judgment means~~ and deletes the received image data from the image processing apparatus, and

said maintenance judgment means attaches information for identifying an image processing apparatus, which is an origin of the image data, to the image data as a transference history of the image data when the image data is to be transferred.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) An image processing method, comprising the steps of:

generating appending information based on contents of an image data received by an image processing apparatus when the image data is received from outside of the image processing apparatus;

storing in a data storage unit an other image data including the appending information;

judging a correlativity between the image data and the other image data based on the appending information; ~~and~~

judging whether the received image data is to be maintained in the data storage unit based on the correlativity~~, wherein~~

~~when judging that the image data is not to be maintained, deleting the received image data from the image processing apparatus.~~;

communicating with other image processing apparatuses, and when it is judged that the image data is not to be maintained, transferring the image data to the other image processing apparatuses and deleting the image data from the image processing apparatus; and

attaching information for identifying an image processing apparatus, which is an origin of the image data, to the image data as a transference history of the image data when the image data is to be transferred.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing thereon a program for causing a computer to function by:

generating appending information based on contents of an image data received by an image processing apparatus when the image data is received from outside of the image processing apparatus;

storing in a data storage unit an other image data including the appending information;

judging a correlativity between the received image data and the other image data based on the appending information; ~~and~~

judging whether the received image data is to be maintained in the data storage unit based on the correlativity~~, wherein~~

~~when judging that the image data is not to be maintained, deleting the received image data from the image processing apparatus;~~

communicating with other image processing apparatuses, and when it is judged that the image data is not to be maintained, transferring the image data to the other image processing apparatuses and deleting the image data from the image processing apparatus; and

attaching information for identifying an image processing apparatus, which is an origin of the image data, to the image data as a transference history of the image data when the image data is to be transferred.

17. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 9,

wherein said ~~selection means~~ selecting repeats ~~to select a plurality of the other image data~~ until a predetermined number of the other image data are selected~~;~~, and

said maintenance judgment means judges that the received image data is not to be maintained if only the other image data~~,~~ of which the correlativity with the received image data is lower than a predetermined reference value~~,~~ is ~~received~~ selected.

18. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said maintenance judgment means judges that the received image data is not to be maintained if an average of the correlativity between the received image data and the other image data is less than an average of the correlativity among the other image data in the data storage unit.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the image data received from outside of the image processing apparatus is through a network.

Claims 21-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The image processing ~~apparatus~~ method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the image data received from outside of the image processing apparatus is through a network.

26. (Currently Amended) The ~~image processing apparatus~~ computer readable medium as claimed in claim 16, wherein the image data received from outside of the image processing apparatus is through a network.

27. (New) The image processing apparatus as claimed in claim 12,

wherein said maintenance judgment means further attaches information for identifying an other image processing apparatus, which is a destination of the image data, to the image data as a transference history of the image data when the image data is to be transferred.